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Coeur d'Alene - Fire.

January 5th, 1911.

The District Forester,  
Missoula, Montana.

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing you herewith annual fire report for the Coeur d'Alene National Forest in accordance with your 00 district fire circular letter of December 13th, 1910. Owing to the incompleteness of this report, I deem it necessary to add an explanation, and I am sorry that I am unable to give you a more complete report on the many fires occurring on this forest during the past season, but I believe you will appreciate the very unusual conditions under which we all worked during the past summer, which have in many instances prevented the proper reports from being submitted to this office. I am quite positive that this report does not include all of the fires occurring on the Coeur-d'Alene National Forest during the season, as in many instance it was necessary to call off all the men on fire patrol and place them in charge of the fire-fighting crews, and new and inexperienced men were left when they could be secured to patrol the forest. Very often these men discovered and extinguished fires which were never reported, and owing to the urgent need of all of our forest forces on the larger fires, these temporary patrolmen were not given the necessary instructions as to how to report on these fires. In many other instances there have been several fires reported as one fire,

and on August 20th there were numerous small fires, which burned together, and have been reported as a single fire. Of the 128 Class A fires, 102 were recorded along the right of way of the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railroad. All of these 102 fires along the right of way occurred prior to August 14th, after which time they became so numerous that the men were kept constantly on guard day and night, and in the confusion kept no record of the number of fires found and extinguished. This same condition prevailed almost throughout the entire forest from August 14th to the end of the fire season, and no accurate record of the fires occurring after August 14th is available at this time, so that practically all of the fires that are covered by this report occurred prior to August 14th. The 180 fires which are reported as having their origin on the Coeur-d'Alene National Forest include all of the fires that were reported where it was not definitely known or shown in the report just where the fire started. The twenty-four fires are all that we have report of as starting on private land within the boundaries of the forest, although there is no question but that there were many others which had their origin on private land within the forest which may or may not have been included in this report. The sixty-eight fires noted under the items as originating on land outside the National Forest boundaries, are only those which were discovered and extinguished or fought by the Forest Service men or others under their charge. There is no report of any fires under this item after August 14th in many of the districts in the forest. Owing to

the fact that many fires, both on private land within the forest and on forest land, and it seems hardly practicable to segregate the acreage burned over by the fires as to their origin, since many of the fires started on the forest joined other fires which were started on private lands causing a general conflagration, and I do not believe it to be just to attempt to make a segregation of this acreage. For the same reason I have not given the figures estimating the amount of the damage resulting from fires having their origin on private lands in the forest. Under the item of Cost of Fighting the Fires, it has been impossible to segregate the amount spent on fires outside or within the forest. Our work in fighting the fires this past year, was made quite general regardless of the forest boundary. We fought the fires the best we could wherever and whenever we found them. In a great many instances, these fires were fought along the boundaries, and the men worked inside and outside the boundaries, and it would be impossible for us to segregate the amount spent outside or inside the forest. I have therefore given only the aggregate amount spent in any manner by this department. There has not as yet been a settlement between the Coeur - d'Alene Timber Protective Association and the Potlatch Timber Protective Association and the Forest Service, and until such settlement is made, it will be impossible for us to give you an accurate statement of the value of co-operation. We also had some co-operation with the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railroad Company and at our suggestion this company placed

quite a large number of patrolmen along the right of way between the west portal of the St. Paul Pass tunnel and the St. Joe. All of these men were placed under the direct supervision of the forest officer in charge of the district with headquarters at Avery, and have reported direct to him. Although the patrol along this railroad was heavier than on any other portion of the forest, almost all of this country was eventually burned over. This is not due necessarily to any neglect, either on the part of the ranger or the railroad company, but was due to conditions and circumstances over which no one had control. In the instance of the Elk Prairie fire which started outside the National Forest boundary, the railroad company instructed the ranger at Avery to assume charge of the fire, to purchase supplies and equipment and hire men, and the expense would be borne by the railroad company. There has never been a record submitted by the railroad company to this office showing the total amount spent on this fire, as it has been only recently that they have completed the payment for the supplies and equipment used on it. You can thus readily see that it would be impossible for me to estimate with any degree of accuracy, the value of co-operation on this forest at this time.

Concerning that part of the report for a summary of fires inside and outside the Coeur d'Alene National Forest for the calendar year of 1910, I have to state that we have very little information that can be considered reliable as to fires occurring outside the National Forest, and therefore the figures

that are given for this do not include very much of the area in the three counties in which this forest is located, other than the information we have been able to gather from the rangers. The Coeur d'Alene Timber Protective Association covers a portion of Shoshone County and a portion of Kootenai County not included within the Coeur d'Alene National Forest. This Association, however, does not include nearly all of the area of Kootenai County outside of the Forest. Inasmuch as this Association has failed to submit to this office, any report covering the fires in their district, the figures given in these reports, you can readily see, cover only a small portion of the area of Kootenai County. We have no information whatsoever which will enable us to make even a rough estimate of the acreage burned over, value of the timber destroyed, or the cost to either private individuals, state, county, timber associations or lumber companies, although it is known that there was a great amount of money spent fighting forest fires throughout this entire region by almost all parties having any great interest in timber lands in both Shoshone County and Kootenai County. Owing to the fact that necessary information for a report by counties is very meager, I have very seriously considered the advisability of attempting to make any report whatsoever as to the fires outside of the National Forest in either Latah or Shoshones counties. The figures for Shoshone County inside the National Forest represent only the information obtainable from the records of the Forest Service. It is believed, although not definitely

known, that we spent from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars fighting the fires outside of the forest in Shoshone County, although the figures shown in the report for inside the forest in Shoshone County includes all of the money spent inside and outside the forest in this county. I have no way of determining just at this time, how much second growth was burned over, as the only classification we have made has been between the merchantable timber and barren, burned over and grass land.

It is also equally hard for me to make an estimate on the value of the improvements which were destroyed by the fire, belonging to private individuals, although it is known that a great many of the homesteaders, miners, prospectors and others, having occasion to be in the woods during the fires, lost considerable property in this fire. The loss in the city of Wallace alone was estimated to be \$350,000. Neither is it known how much live stock was destroyed, although I would judge that in Shoshone County the value of the live stock destroyed reached five thousand dollars. All of the men burned in this forest lost their lives in Shoshone County. I have not given an estimate for the fires occurring outside of the county, other than the number which we have definite record of. In Kootenai County by far the most serious fires were not within the forest, but were west of Coeur d'Alene Lake, and we have absolute record of them.

In Latah County, the fires on the forest were not at all serious, and although there were several bad fires outside the

forest in the area covered by the Potlatch Timber Protective Association, no reports on these fires have been received in this office. I believe that you will agree with me that inasmuch as we are unable to give you anything like a full and complete report on the fire by counties that rather than having the report incomplete we should submit no report at all. Inasmuch as these reports would indicate that the National Forests which have had more protection than any other area in the region suffered more from the fires than the areas outside the forest which received far less protection, I believe that the reports by counties which are herewith submitted, should not be considered in any statistics which are now being prepared or may be hereafter prepared in connection with the forest fires of these counties.

I should be pleased to know whether or not this meets with your approval, and if it does not, I should be pleased to furnish you with any other information, which I may be able to obtain, although I do not feel that it will be possible for us to get anything like an accurate estimate of these fires by counties.

Very truly yours,

ROSCOE HAINES,  
Acting Forest Supervisor